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ABSTRACT

While much has been done in the area of bilingual education since Title VII was passed in 1968, some changes in the direction of programs should be made. Advances have occurred in systematizing curriculum development, producing more materials, developing teacher competencies, and generating greater interest in bilingual education. However, preservice education has prepared few teachers to work with minority students and in bilingual programs. Furthermore, teacher education has not addressed the prevailing tendency, reflected even in national policy and legislation, to view bilingual education programs as remedies for the problems of non-English speakers, and to emphasize language more than culture in such programs. Redirecting bilingual education requires that: (1) programs integrate culture and history into the curriculum, thus reflecting the aims of parents who initially called for bilingual education for their children; (2) bilingual education not be identified with compensatory education, which assumes that speaking a language other than English is a limitation; (3) teacher education emphasize field training, humanistic approaches, the teacher's role as change agent, and training of paraprofessionals; (4) curriculum development consider the many factors surrounding schooling and students' lives; and (5) research focus on elements leading to quality and effectiveness in bilingual education. (Author/MJL)

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Panel No. 1

BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Paper presented by:

Sonia Nieto

on

CURRICULUM AND TEACHER TRAINING IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION: A VISION FOR THE 80's

The Eastern Regional Conference on Hispanic Educational Issues:
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In the forward-looking vision perpetuated in our modern society, we tend to ask only "Where are we going and how can we get there?" Seldom do we ask: "Where have we come from?" or "Was it worth the trip?" The field of bilingual education has been no exception to this rule. We have spent our time planning programs, developing materials, arguing the virtues of bilingual education and in general, forging ahead, many times without stopping to review the results of our efforts and often not even recognizing the reasons for certain failures. This paper will focus on the past twelve years in bilingual education with a view towards analyzing the road we want to chart in curriculum development and teacher-training in the decade ahead.

In looking back over the first twelve years of bilingual education (taking as a point of departure the passage of Title VII of the ESEA in 1968), we can reasonable say that a great deal has been learned.[1] In the case of curriculum development, for example, those first fumbling and exciting years of desperate searching and creation of appropriate curriculum materials have led to a highly sophisticated network of eighteen dissemination and assessment centers funded under Title VII (C.F. Title VII Network Centers and Fellowship Programs, 1979-1980 from NCBE). In some important ways, we in the field have learned from past mistakes. For example, the tendency to approach curriculum in a fragmented way and with a duplication of effort has been remedied somewhat with the creation of these national curriculum development networks. It was not unusual in the first days and years of bilingual education to find two schools in close proximity working on exactly the same curriculum with absolutely no knowledge of what each was up to. These local curriculum efforts did, of course, have some real advantages in that they focused on local needs and local concerns and were geared towards specific children. It was, though, impractical for many purposes and consequently has been replaced by

a more national approach. The results of this approach so far have been uneven. That is, in some materials, a conscious effort has been made to reflect the culture, experiences, and language variations of specific groups. In other cases, the materials developed have been inferior to commercially-made materials and insensitive to the children they seek to serve. Another negative consequence of the national effort may be that teachers will once again be removed from their crucial role in curriculum, for othen curriculum and content area specialists are the ones directing these efforts.

One lesson that we as teachers learned very early in bilingual education was that textbooks and other classroom materials were either non-existant or completely inappropriate. In a short time, many of us became instant authors, often writing and illustrating our own books for classroom use. The ditto machine became the most widely used piece of equipment in bilingual schools.

The story has changed quite a bit now. At conferences and in bookstores, we are now accosted with mountains of textbooks and a variety of other teaching aids. The process of ordering books for bilingual classrooms is no longer the simple task it once was. On the contrary, it now takes days to leaf through all the catalogs, to examine all the materials, and to compare the virtues of all that is available.

Yet, are we in better standing than several years ago? In a sense, certainly the picture looks brighter. We have more of a choice than simply electing between a textbook from Spain and one from Mexico, neither of which really centers on the issues confronting our primarily Puerto Rican students. On the other hand, other texts have been developed which, although reflective of our culture, may be just as insensitive, just as unrealistic, and just as boring as what was available a dozen years ago. Dick and Jane simply will not do as models for Puerto Rican children, whether in English or in Spanish. Perhaps what we have learned from

our experiences of the last few years is that whether materials are developed in Barcelona or Brooklyn is not the point. Rather, the purpose behind those efforts is crucial in determining their appropriateness for bilingual programs. For too long, practitioners in the field have tended to look for guidance to the publishing companies and distributors for the definitive answers to our problems. It is now time to turn back to ourselves, to become more introverted in our attempt to provide the best possible curriculum materials for bilingual programs.

In the area of teacher training for bilingual education, much has been written over the last few years. Probably the most ambitious effort concerning desirable teacher competencies in bilingual education are the Guidelines for the Preparation and Certification of Teachers of Bilingual-Bicultural Education (1974) developed by a conference of experts in bilingual education. The competencies they signaled ranged from personal qualities to school-community relations and define the qualities that an ideal bilingual/bicultural teacher should possess. Because they are all-inclusive, they have been used by several states in determining certification requirements for bilingual teachers. In addition, some colleges and universities have used them as a framework for developing pre-service and in-service teacher education. Much more has been written since 1974 on teacher education (Blanco, 1977a and 1977b; IRES Institute, 1975; Casso and Gonzalez, 1974; Palmer, 1975); the field has been fortunate indeed to have input from so many experts in teacher education. We have certainly come a long way from the days when speaking two languages was the sole criterion for a bilingual teacher. In fact, many different approaches have been developed, from readings for prospective bilingual teachers (Ballesteros, 1979) to bibliographies (Dissemination and Assessment Center for Bilingual Education, 1975) to computer-assisted programs (Golub, 1976). These efforts have been translated into myriad teacher education programs. According

to Blanco (1977a), the number of pre-service programs in bilingual education throughout the country tripled in just one year (1974-1975). In the same period, the number of master's programs went from 43 to 69 and doctoral programs from 8 to 17. If this is any indication, certainly a great deal of attention is being given to teacher training in bilingual education. It is a tremendously encouraging sign, for most of us would agree that the quality of a bilingual program relies most on the quality of its teachers.

In spite of this, we must question whether the quality of teaching, or even of teacher training, is better. Looking to the research, we find some surprising and often disappointing trends. In a massive study on pre-service teacher education conducted by Joyce and others (1977), questionnaires were sent to administrative officials of teacher education facilities, faculty, and students. Although the study does not focus on bilingual education in particular, there are some important findings that relate to the efforts of teacher education facilities in bilingual education. For example, through the questionnaires it became apparent that both faculty and students indicated relatively few students were being prepared to work with minority groups. Related to this is the fact that only a small number are being taught the history or culture of minority groups. Even more disturbing for bilingual education specifically was the finding that only a tiny fraction of the students were being prepared to work effectively in bilingual problems. The implications for providing quality bilingual programs across the nation for the more than 5 million children in the United States who do not speak English are clear: "Far too few persons speak a language other than English to make it possible to mount a bilingual education program on a nationwide basis with any likelihood of success."[2] Even more significant and distressing is the finding that over two-thirds of the students did not even bother to respond to the

questions concerning their preparation for working with minority group children. This is bleak news for our children, whether they be in bilingual programs or not, for it points to the fact that teacher-training institutions are still engaged in preparing predominately white middle-class teachers to teach in predominately white middle-class schools. In this regard, we do not seem to have progressed very far in the past dozen years.

In the specific field of bilingual education, two studies are worth noting. The first, an investigation of acceptance of bilingual education principles in actual classroom instruction, was conducted by Travelle (1978). She found that bilingual teachers tended to provide instruction in English more frequently than in Spanish. Moreover, these teachers, in working with Mexican-American youngsters, often neglected to include the history and culture of Mexican-Americans into the curriculum. In addition, they did not utilize Mexican-American community resources and resource people to enrich the educational program. Another study, this one by Nicholl (1978), researched several federally funded bilingual programs in California. Although cultural pluralism was a stated goal of most of these programs, an analysis of the data (teacher-pupil characteristics, Hispanic culture displayed in the classroom, Spanish language books used, and the use of oral Spanish) led to the conclusion that the projects were aimed more at assimilation. Specifically, he found that the projects tended to separate culture from language, emphasizing the latter while almost neglecting the former. Furthermore, the culture which was presented was not the one which the children were living, but rather an extension of the culture of Mexico (traditional, rural, and folk).

Both these studies point towards a disturbing trend in bilingual education, one which teacher training does not seem to have addressed. That is, there still seems to be a tendency to view bilingual programs as bandaids to a problem, the

problem being defined as students who do not speak English. It is clear that defining competencies for bilingual teachers will of itself not change the reality that these studies point out.

What then have we learned about bilingual teacher training in the past? First, we can say that we probably began defining qualities and competencies too late in the decade. Although these efforts were certainly worthwhile, the outcomes in actual classroom teaching cannot yet be determined. Second, teacher training alone will not do the job until national policy and perhaps even legislation concerning bilingual education is changed. We should not be surprised, therefore, that studies tell us that bilingual teachers stress English in their classrooms; after all, that is what is stressed in both legislation and national policy.

All of which brings us to "A Vision for the 80's." There are several reasons for the choice of this particular title. First, it underlies the fact that what is being proposed are recommendations for iedal conditions in curriculum development and teacher training in the years ahead. Second, it emphasizes the generally optimistic thrust which bilingual education has had. We are indeed visionaries if we see hope in the education of our youngsters in spite of current statistics concerning drop-out rates, achievement scores, and other indices of progress or the lack of it.

Granted that we must temper our optimism with reality, the title of this paper also indicates that bilingual education probably still represents one of our best shots for the future of the education of Hispanic youngsters.

Recommendations for the 80's

In making recommendations for bilingual education for the 80's, I do not intend to cover all bases. Rather, I will limit my vision to some general aspects of bilingual education and to the specific areas of curriculum development and teacher training. I do so as a participant and observer in bilingual education who believes that we must take a long hard look at the road ahead in order to help effect some needed changes in direction.

I. KEEPING IN MIND THE ROOTS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

First and foremost, it is crucial that in the years ahead we keep in mind the roots of bilingual education so that we strive for the same goals as those who first brought it about. We cannot lose sight of the fact that bilingual education came about not as a legislative or administrative initiative, but rather as a response to pressure from linguistic minority groups in this country. Community activists across the nation struggled for and eventually won the right to have their children educated in a bilingual setting. The fact that each group's culture and history were to be an integral part of the program was also no accident. On the contrary, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and others demanded this emphasis in the curriculum as a non-negotiable part of bilingual education. These early pioneers in the bilingual education movement, that is parents, community people, and teachers, had some very specific goals in mind when they pressured for bilingual education. These can probably best be summed up as follows: (1) to provide native language instruction for children so that cognitive development not be interrupted; (2) to teach the children their history and culture as an integral part of the curriculum; (3) to use bilingual education as a means of providing the best possible education for their children; and (4) to involve parents, teachers, and other community people as decision-makers in order to make education more meaningful for linguistic minority children.

Why keep these roots in mind? Basically for one reason: nobody should decide anybody else's agenda. And when they do, the goals of those affected most directly are often subverted by other interests. Bilingual education did not begin as a way to increase the marketing potential of publishers; it did not begin as a means of fattening the federal bureaucracy; nor did it begin as a device for enhancing the role of the United States in Spanish-speaking countries. In this context, it is interesting to note that the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies, which recently released its report entitled Strength Through Wisdom, has described foreign language abilities among Americans as completely inadequate. In addition, the report states that this is happening at a time when international involvement of the United States is greater than ever. This is all well and good if it can be used as a rationale to spur the growth of language teaching and bilingual education in this country. However, if we were to use bilingual education to teach our children to become bureaucrats with the A.I.D. in Chile or in El Salvador, or with the U.S. Navy in Vieques, manipulating and taking advantage of their Hispanic brothers and sisters but this time in Spanish, the original aims of bilingual education would indeed be subverted. No, bilingual education did not begin as a way of opening up international markets either.

If we keep in mind the children, their parents' hopes for a brighter future, and the kind of struggle that they sustained for years, then I believe that bilingual education will stay on course and will not become the maidservant of other interests not our own.

II. BILINGUAL EDUCATION IS NOT COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

Bilingual education, as an educational endeavor, must rid itself of the cloak of compensatory education if it is to remain a viable and creditable option

in the 80's. The very fact that bilingual education is considered compensatory vis a vis the legislation is in itself an indication of the way in which our children are viewed. That is, speaking a language other than English is a limitation, indeed a handicap to overcome. And overcome it we must, the wisdom goes, just as quickly as possible, through ESL immersion-type programs and a transitional approach. As long as this vision of bilingual education is perpetuated, there will be a missionary zeal to the movement reminiscent of the "white man's burden" philosophy of so long ago. The movement must in the 80's stand on its own two feet, repudiating any notion of burden, of handicap, or of limitation.

Using different approaches, this notion of bilingual education as compensatory education has been rejected by most in the field. For instance, Cardenas and Cardenas (1973), in developing their "Theory of Incompatabilities" mention five areas where the learning characteristics of the children may be incompatible with the instructional program. This theory places the burden on school systems, not on the so-called inferiority of the children. Saville-Troike (1978) has also provided sensitive guidance in this area by designing methods for having teachers develop cultural awareness which is not based on the majority's cultural norms. Her suggestions for field-based training and for data gathering skills should prove beneficial to all bilingual teachers.

In the same vein are the theories of Castaneda, et al. (1974). The philosophy of education which they call "cultural democracy" is a sound basis upon which to develop bilingual education in general and bilingual teacher training in particular in the decade ahead:

> The requirements of cultural democracy occasion a re-examination of what a teacher needs to know in order to be effective. At the very least, the definition of professional competency must be extended to include more than knowledge of specific subject matters. The teacher must first become sensitized to teaching

> styles and interpersonal behaviors that characterize the socialization practices of different cultural groups. Equally important is the teacher's making a conscientious effort to understand the life styles, values and interpersonal behaviors honored by these cultures. Finally, the teacher must develop a framework in which to meaningfully label important differences between the various cultures represented in the classroom or the school in general.[3]

Using this theory of "cultural democracy" as a basis, Gray and Arias (1977) conducted an extensive review of literature and came to the conclusion that incorporating the principles of this theory into actual classroom practices would help in the development of positive attitudes towards both cultures.

In another important study, Teachers Vs. Students (1973) the Office for Civil Rights sought to determine whether and to what extent there was a difference in interaction between teachers and Anglo children and teachers and Chicano children. They found six areas of interaction in which there were statistically significant differences. These included, among others, praising or encouraging and positive teacher response. Although this study does not focus on bilingual programs, its message is relevant for our purposes: minority children, in this case Chicanos, are treated differently and usually this difference is a negative one. The implications of this and the other studies and theories cited here are clear: bilingual education and in fact the education of Hispanic children in general must be taken out of the realm of compensatory education and placed in the mainstream of educational practices where it belongs.

III. BILINGUAL TEACHER TRAINING

In relation to teacher education, there are several recommendations which I would like to raise briefly:

A. Pre-service education, if it is to equip teachers to deal realistically with bilingual programs, must become more field-based. In some places, this is already the case and students may spend up to two or more years in actual classroom situations. This practice must

become more widespread and more uniform in order to provide students with meaningful experiences prior to actual teaching.

B. The goals of bilingual education may not be well served by Competency-Based Teacher Education (CBTE). According to Clauser (1977), some of the basic assumptions underlying competency-based education are:

1. that the behavior of people can be observed and classified as effective or ineffective;
2. that a list of effective behaviors can be generated as a description of 'good' role behavior;
3. that the listed behaviors can be converted into performance objectives to serve as a basis for developing curricula.[4]

If we study these statements carefully, it appears that they go against the very grain of "cultural democracy" which has been identified as a sound basis for bilingual/bicultural programs. Granted that we need a clear picture of what kinds of competencies bilingual teachers need in order to succeed in their classrooms. Nevertheless, the mechanistic approach that so many CBTE programs seem to be taking only serves to perpetuate a philosophy based on sameness and conformity. It can best be expressed by these values:

- a given competency can only be demonstrated through certain behaviors;
- all competencies are observable; therefore,
- all prospective teachers must learn the same behaviors in order to demonstrate the same competencies.

Taken to these extremes, the CBTE movement can become as rigid and as petty as the behavioral objective movement proved to be, one day perhaps spawning a companion volume to Bloom's Taxonomies but based on teacher competencies. If we, however, believe that there are

some competencies which defy classification into a set of observed behaviors; that a humanistic approach to teacher training rather than a technological approach is ultimately more beneficial; and that human behavior is more complex and subtle than a simple check-list; then, we will be wary of the excesses of CBTE for bilingual teacher training.

C. In the years ahead, the role of the paraprofessional should be both emphasized and enhanced. Paraprofessionals are a valuable (albeit ludicrously underpaid) resource in the bilingual class. More thought should be given to creative use of their time and talents. In addition, teachers should receive structured in-service instruction on how to work with a paraprofessional.

D. Finally, teachers should learn to view their role as that of change agents. Traditionally, teachers have responded to difficult situations with a sense of powerlessness, often because of the very structures in the organizations in which they work or study. In the years ahead, emphasis should be placed, both at the pre-service and the in-service levels, on the change agent capability of teachers. The implication is that teachers should be equipped with the tools to control their environment, whether it be in learning how to develop their own curriculum, to work effectively with parents, or to effect policy decisions. Teachers, like parents, have a great deal of potential for leading bilingual education in the right direction in the 80's. It is time to provide them with the attitudes, the methods, and the skills for becoming leaders.

IV. BILINGUAL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum development in bilingual education has come a long way, but much more needs to be done if bilingual education is to be a meaningful experience for Hispanic children. I have three specific recommendations in this context:

A. Curriculum should be seen as a global approach, not a piece-meal process. Because curriculum is more than just the books we use, a global approach implies that teachers should become aware of classroom practices, such as grouping and tracking; they should be aware of the influence of classroom environments on learning; they should understand the issues of the hidden and emergent curricula; and they should develop a healthy skepticism of any curriculum which will supposedly solve all their problems. A curriculum is not simply a book that is handed to teachers when they walk into a school, but rather the complex of materials, interactions, and environment that characterize what goes on in a school from day to day. Given this framework, we can look for no easy answers, but only try to develop approaches and materials which will best fit the needs of students.

B. Related to this, I believe, is the fact that curriculum development should be viewed as a process and not simply as content to be churned out. Because we are often so concerned with products, we neglect to see how the way we do things affects them in the long run. It seems to be more important to determine the most effective and appropriate ways of developing curriculum than determining whether to develop a math or a social studies curriculum. If we are more concerned with process, some of the questions we should be asking are: (1) Who should be involved in developing curriculum? (2) What working style should be developed for the group? (3) How can we determine what

is most important for our students to learn? and (4) How should we go about actually developing the curriculum?

C. Finally, we in the field of bilingual education should think of curriculum as a potentially liberating force. It is unfortunate that curriculum is so often stultifying and deadening, boxing children into selected patterns of behavior. The field of bilingual education can learn a great deal about curriculum from new and progressive theorists in the field as well as from practitioners who have used curriculum as an open and enlightening tool. Curriculum in bilingual education would certainly show dramatic and qualitative differences if we were to use the example of people like Freire in the coming years. The possibilities for basing curriculum on the lives of the children themselves, on their culture, their class background, their values, are indeed exciting. I certainly hope it is this liberating approach, and not the technological one, that the field will reflect in the 80's.

V. THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

The role of the community in both curriculum development and teacher education needs to be explored further. For years we have been advocating community and parental participation in bilingual education, but the reality of this participation has been peripheral. The possibilities of parental involvement in curriculum development are endless; we need simply to design a framework for such involvement. Likewise, in teacher education the role of the community has often been overlooked. Yet few would argue that parents have much to teach and to share with teachers. Bilingual education in the 80's would no doubt be strengthened if wer were to form a partnership with the community on many fronts.

VI. RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR THE 80's

My last recommendation is one which has been mentioned many times before, but is nonetheless worth repeating: that is, we must dedicate ourselves to doing quality research in the years ahead to really find out where we are headed. As Troike has so aptly said, "In a nation which supposedly prides itself on rational planning, it is remarkable that over a billion dollars should have been spent on program activities, and less than one tneth of one percent of that amount on research . . . which is vital if the quality of programs is to be improved."[5]

Specifically in the areas of teacher training and curriculum development, the kinds of research which I would hope we concern ourselves with in the years ahead would seek to answer questions such as:

- What makes for a quality teacher-training program?
- What classroom practices make for a quality bilingual program?
- What is effective community participation?
- What processes are most effective in bilingual curriculum development?

In portraying a vision of teacher training and curriculum development for the 1980's, I have attempted to make recommendations which would make for more systemmatic planning in the next decade. If we maintain a unity of purpose and a commitment to the best education for Hispanic children, the quality of bilingual education will doubtless improve. Nevertheless, I will conclude on a note of caution: bilingual education is not enough. This is certainly a sobering thought for those of us who have been struggling for bilingual education for so long. Yet it is a necessary caveat because so often we are confronted with Pollyanna-like visions of what bilingual education can accomplish. Confirmed optimists have often done our movement more harm than good, for they have had the effect of convincing teachers, legislators, and even our own communities that bilingual education is

the answer to all our ills. Our view cannot be so simplistic. We need only to look around and see the conditions under which Hispanics in this country live, the unemployment, the inhuman housing conditions, the racism, and the poor medical services, to realize that a program which deals with children for five hours a day even if for several years is simply not enough. If we were to confine our struggle to bilingual education, we would not be visionaries, but only shortsighted individuals. As advocates for bilingual education, we must also become advocates for quality housing, for decent jobs, and in fact, for the complete liberation of Hispanics from misery and oppression. Our vision for bilingual education in the 80's must be only a minor part of our overall vision, a necessary part of it certainly, but only one facet of our commitment to the general quality of life for our people. Given this framework, bilingual education becomes one more means to an end, not an end in and of itself.

FOOTNOTES

1. For a particularly insightful analysis of the first decade of bilingual education, C.F. Troike (1978). His review covers everything from research to legislation and is not limited, as the present paper is, to curriculum development and teacher-training.

2. Bruce Joyce, et al. Pre-Service Teacher Education. (Washington, D.C., DHEW, 1977), p. 231.

3. Alfredo Castanedo, et al. New Approaches to Bilingual, Bicultural Education, p. 12.

4. Robert E. Clauser. "Competency-Based Education: Curriculum Revision and Evaluation." Bilingual Pre-School Projects Conference. (San Antonio, Texas, November 15-18, 1977), Conference Proceedings.

5. Rudolph Troike. "Bilingual Education in the United States: The First Decade." International Review of Education, V. 24, n. 3, p. 402.